

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5397
INFO AMEMBASSY BERN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 1167

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PCAT, NO
SUBJ: INFORMATION NEEDS ON WESTERN EUROPEAN CONVENTIONAL ARMS
TRANSFERS TO THE THIRD WORLD

REF (A) STATE 77 257011, (B) STATE 045364, (:) 77 OSLO 4438,
(D) 77 OSLO 3866

1. THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT HAS A STRONG, TRADITIONAL INTEREST
IN ARMS CONTROL AND THUS WELCOMES SINCERELY THE AMERICAN
INITIATIVES IN THE AREA OF CONVERNITIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS.
THE GON WAS MOST IMPRESSED BY THE PRECISE 8 PERCENT REDUCTIONS
CALLED FOR IN THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECENTLY ANNOUNCED PLAN.
NORWEGIANS HAVE LONG BEEN UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE SEEMING
CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THEIR CLOSEST ALLY'S OFTEN ENUNCIATED
DESIRES FOR WORLD PEACE, NONPROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
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AND THE US ROLE AS THE WORLD'S LEADING ARMS SUPPLIER.

2. THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT TRANSLATED ITS NATIONAL INTEREST
IN ARMS CONTROL INTO A POLICY WHICH FOR YEARS HAS STRICTLY
LIMITED THE SALE OF NORWEGIAN-PRODUCED "ARTICLES OF WAR"
AND PROHIBITED ENTIRELY THEIR SALE TO COUNTRIES "AT WAR OR
THREATENED BY WAR." (SEE FULL DISCUSSION OF 50 YEAR HISTORY

OF NORWEGIAN ARMS EXPORT POLICY, REF OSLO 3866 OF 1977.) AT TIMES, THESE PROHIBITIONS HAVE BEEN DILUTED TO PERMIT SALES OF, FOR INSTANCE, MOTO TORPEDO BOATS (DESCRIBED AS POLICE PATROL CRAFT) TO MALAYSIA AND OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS AT THE HEIGHT OF THE VIET NAM WAR. HOWEVER, MORE RECENTLY THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN STEPS TO TIGHTEN TRANSFERS OF CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS OR WEAPONS COMPONENTS SO THAT TODAY THE ONLY POSSIBLE RECEIPIENTS OF DOMESTICALLY-PRODUCED MILITARY EQUIPMENT ARE NATO COUNTRIES (EXCLUDING TURKEY AND GREECE IF AND WHEN THEY APPEAR TO BE AT WAR OR THREATENED BY WAR) AND AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. THE SERIOUSNESS OF THEIR INTENT WAS REFLECTED TWO MONTHS AGO BY THE GON'S REAL CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF NORWEGIAN MANUFACTURED F-16 COMPONENTS REACHING COUNTRIES (E.E. IRAN AND ISRAEL) OTHER THAN THOSE LISTED ABOVE (SEE 77 OSLO 4438).

3. NORWAY HAS A FAIRLY SOPHISTICATED IF LIMITED CAPABILITY TO PROUCE MILITARY EQUIPMENT. THE TWO MANUFACTURING CENTERS ARE THE 51 PERCENT STATE-OWNED KONGSBERG VAAPENFABRIKK LOCATED IN KONGSBERG (75 MILES SOUTH OF OSLO) AND THE RAUFOSS AMMUNITION FABRIKK IN RAUFOSS (70 MILES NORTH OF OSLO). NORWEGIAN EXPERTISE CENTERS LARGELY ON THE PRODUCTION OF AMMUNITION; ADVANCED TEHNOLOGY FUSES AND ELECTRONIC COMPONENTS. THEY HAVE ALSO PRODUCED EXCELLENT MOTOR TORPEDO BOATS, A SURFACE TO SURFACE MISSLE (THE PENGUIN) AND ARE BULDING PART OF THE NAVIGATION AND FIRE CONTROL SYSTEM
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FOR THE F-16.

4. THERE IS LITTLE CHANE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE THAT NORWAY WOULD EXPAND ITS MILITARY EQUIPMENT PRODUCTION CAPABILITY BEYOND THAT IT IS NOW, BEARING IN MIND THE COUNTRY'S STRICT SALES REGULATION. THEY WOULD, OF COURSE, WELCOME ADDITIONAL BUSINESS AT BOTH FACTORIES (FROM ACCEPTABLE CUSTOMERS, THROUGH CO-PRODUCTION) TO GENERATE JOBS IN EMPLOYMENT HUNGRY AND UNEMPLOYMENT SENSITIVE NORWAY.
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